



ATTN: Parents of School-Age Athletes: Chiropractors and MHSAA Athletic Screenings

Background

Parents of school-age children often ask their family chiropractor to perform the Michigan High School Athletic Association's pre-participation physical form. Unfortunately, despite having the required education and training to complete the form, the MHSAA will not accept the form if completed by a chiropractor.

The Michigan Association of Chiropractors (MAC) is asking the MHSAA Representative Council to allow chiropractic physicians to be one of the health professional provider groups – along with MDs, DOs, PAs and NPs – allowed to examine student athletes and recommend him/her as being able to compete in supervised athletic activities. Our key reasons for this include:

Education and Training

Chiropractic physicians are educated and trained as portal of entry, physician-level health care providers.

Under Michigan law, chiropractic physicians have the right and responsibility to examine, diagnose, and create treatment plans. If the diagnosis is not something the chiropractor can treat, they have a duty to refer the patient to an appropriate healthcare provider.

The MHSAA Screening

What is required by MHSAA for a student to be able to participate in school athletics is not a true examination, which includes not only the taking of the patient's health history and an appropriate physical exam, but also the labeling of a diagnosis and treatment plan (or referral).

In contrast, the MHSAA examination is a pass/fail screening to determine if a student meets minimal standards – there is no diagnosis or treatment plan.

If the student passes, they can participate. A failure in any area means the student needs to have the issue resolved, and the chiropractic physician can refer the patient to an appropriate provider.

Need Among Chiropractic Patients and in Healthcare Shortage Areas

The public is driving the need to include chiropractic physicians in this process.

The parents of students often ask chiropractic physicians to perform these screenings.

Since there are no educational or legal barriers to chiropractic physicians performing this service, it causes confusion and questions the legitimacy of the current MHSAA stance.

Additionally, since the population of healthcare providers is not evenly distributed in Michigan, there are areas of healthcare shortages – particularly in rural and urban areas – that make it difficult to access providers who can perform the MHSAA screening.

This inequity adds costs in terms of time and money for students and their families in these areas.

Adding chiropractic physicians to the MHSAA list of approved healthcare providers who can perform this vital function will help alleviate this problem.

Next Steps

Based on these key reasons, there is no legal or rational basis for MHSAA to not include chiropractic physicians in the list of healthcare professionals who can perform this screening.

Please contact Mark Uyl at (517) 332-5046 or muyl@mhsaa.com, let him know that you are a parent of a school-age athlete who sees a chiropractor for their health care needs, and respectfully request that the MHSAA allow chiropractic physicians to perform MHSAA athletic pre-participation screenings.